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Fabrikschutz in the Soviet Zone

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1. After the establishment of the German Administration of the Interior in the fall of 1946, its Abteilung "S" (Uniformed Police Department) gradually developed plans for the reorganization of the services performed by the so-called protective watchmen associations (Wach- und Schliessgesellschaften).. Under the pre-Hitler national trade laws these were private associations, and the national police were not concerned with them. The protection of life and property as a business was subject only to the legal restrictions laid down in the Reichsgewerbeordnung, which among other things required that prospective heads of such enterprises have sufficient capital and be personally dependable.
2. Beginning in 1933 the protective associations gradually came under the control of Nazi party members. This, together with increasing emphasis on Nazi theories of plant protection and the placing of the main responsibility with the Gestapo, resulted in a decline of private protective associations. They did, however, continue to exist until 1945, at which time most of them voluntarily went out of business. The firms which remained in business in the Soviet Zone did so only by being enlisted in the protection of Soviet installations. An example is the Potsdamer Wach- und Schliessgesellschaft, which was assigned by the Russians to the protection of the extensive UFA Film AG properties in Babelsberg near Potsdam.
3. Beginning, then, in 1945, the "Objekt-" or "Fabrikschutz" (Factory Guards) were envisaged as replacements for the former private protective associations. In actuality, in the fall of 1948 plant protection still remained largely in the hands of the individual plant managements, who made local arrangements for private guards. In the fall of 1948 the GAI, together with the "German" Economic

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Commission (DWA) reviewed the plans for the thorough reorganization and centralization of industrial protection. It is now planned to create a politically reliable, physically fit "Fabrikschutz", uniformed and armed. Reports on the tentatively planned strength of this force go as high as 65,000.

4. The new system, as projected by Abteilung "S" of the GAI, would have the protection of buildings, industries, and real estate no longer considered a trade. The old trade laws covering these endeavors would be repealed or ignored, and protective enterprises still existing would be expropriated without indemnification. Plant guard units of the "Fabrikschutz" would be mandatory wherever and whenever the size or type of the plant warranted a permanent guard of at least five men. Small-sized plants, stores, repair shops, and so forth, would be protected by the so-called Guard and Protection Service (Wach- und Schutzdienst). The latter is conceived as a communal enterprise, to be authorized wherever the need exists; communities too small to support such a service would be empowered to pool resources with neighboring communities.
5. In substance, the new system would amount to a socialization of what was formerly a private enterprise, and simultaneously its transformation into a police reserve or even an armed militia. The latter trend can be discerned in the projected application of personnel qualification rules conforming to those used in the civil service. The "Fabrikschutz" would be placed ultimately under the control of the chiefs of the police of the several Lander, who would prescribe personnel policies, uniforms, and so forth. The Lander chiefs would thus in effect be placed in command of a corps of politically selected auxiliary police available for a number of purposes. Service regulations and the professional police direction of the "Fabrikschutz" would be the responsibility of Abteilung "S" of the GAI, and under it, presumably, of the uniformed police departments of the Lander.
6. The actual implementation of these plans is still in abeyance, probably because the "German" Economic Commission and the Central Secretariat of the SED have not as yet approved the measures.

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